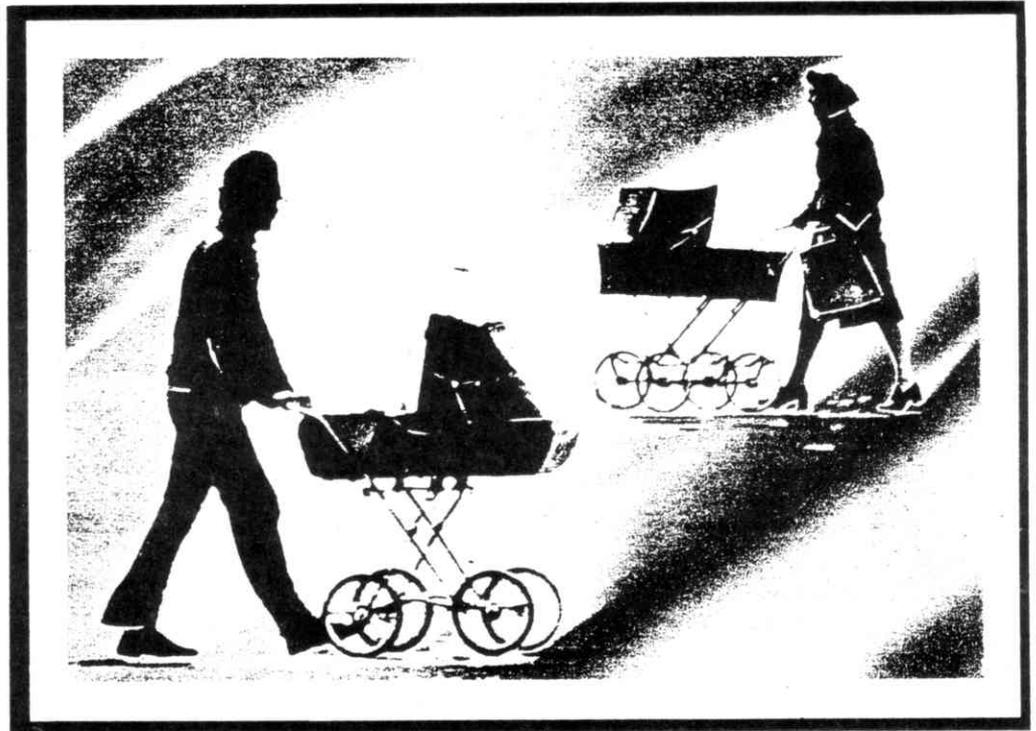


# *The child care worker*



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Journal of the  
National Association of  
Child Care Workers

**NACCW/NVK**

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# Reflections from the Field

There must be *dialogue* in a journal of this kind. Without it there is the danger of the ivy-covered tower syndrome, in which literature and academia become divorced from practice — albeit it in a polite sort of way. Of course, we like to see in our journal the 'respectability' of sound theory and the reassurance that we are not alone in child care work, but we don't actually *read* the journal, for it has little to do with what actually goes on in our institutions ...

There was a time when the news pages of this journal were filled with interesting activities and ideas from the various Regions of the NACCW. In this way, members saw themselves and their work reflected, they read about each other, and there was a trading post of information between Regions, between organisations, between people. This idea seems to have died, or at least to have become dormant for a while, and this may be a good thing, for it is never useful to continue with something just for its own sake. Perhaps its day will come again. But in the mean time, how do we let each other know what

we think, how do we listen to each other and exchange ideas and information between ourselves?

In this issue we have introduced two new ideas to achieve this.

The first idea is that of 'polling' member organisations on specific issues so as to stimulate thinking and discussion. This month we have chosen a subject which is uppermost in all of our minds — the current political changes in South Africa. How are these perceived by staff and children, how are they inspiring or affecting the children in our institutions? We are all confronted not only the continuing political debate and changes, but also by the sensational daily drama of new political tragedies and horrors, excitements and developments. At our request, a number of children's homes talked among themselves, staff and children, to give us two compelling pages of comment (see page 6) which may help the rest of us as we walk with our children through these tumultuous times. The second idea was to collect together a group of children to hear what *they* felt were important issues for the pages of this journal. The children are, after all, the consumers of our service, and are therefore an important constituency for us to consider. Turn to page 11 to discover some affirmingly positive reactions toward you, the child care professional, as well as a

number of issues to which the young people themselves feel we should be paying some more attention.

So we achieve some dialogue, and we look forward to hearing whether our readers find these features interesting and/or helpful. It could even be that someone is stirred (inspired or outraged, whichever) to write to tell us. Or, perhaps, to suggest topics which we might include in future issues.

FROM JACQUI MICHAEL:

## Conference 1993

The NACCW Biennial Conferences are usually a wonderful opportunity to meet people and exchange ideas. This year will be no exception! We are confident that child and youth care people from all over the country will be there — anxious to meet you and share information. Often, in practice, we become so busy "getting on with the job" and so stressed just trying to keep our heads above water, that we forget there is a

world outside of our settings. Conferences are a great time to step back, do something different, open ourselves to learning new insights and methods of our profession — and just have fun — so that we feel vitalised to go back and put to use our new knowledge and enthusiasm for the better service of the children and youth we work with.

Those of you who receive this journal will already have your Registration Forms. Together with this issue we are posting a First Draft of the Conference Programme — a first look at the menu, so to speak. Please register early! Our conference venue can only hold 450 people — so it will be first come, first served! Additional registration forms are available from the Conference Organiser, Mrs L. Stephenson, P. O. Box 327, WITS 2050 — Telephone (011) 339-7835 — or any Regional NACCW office. If you are coming to the Conference, it would be great if you would come to the dinner on the evening of Wednesday the 7th July as well. We look forward to seeing you there — both at the Conference and at the Dinner!

Appreciation is expressed to the PG Foundation for their sponsorship of this journal in 1993



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The International Federation of Educative Communities



The International Association of Workers with Troubled Children

With such NACCW courses presently running as the Certificate in the Training of Caregivers, the Problem Profile Approach, the Diploma in Child Care Administration, as well as that on Consultative Supervision in Child Care, more and more South African child care professionals are involved in staff and team development. Professor **James Anglin**, Director of the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria in Canada, writes in the FICE Bulletin on five principles of child care staff development.



# How Staff Develop

This article presents a framework for understanding and addressing staff development which draws significantly on the work of several colleagues at the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria, a colleague in Alberta, and on some research into staff needs that I have undertaken in recent years. The concepts and approaches outlined have been developed in relation to child and youth care work. However, I anticipate that, with some modification, many points may be relevant to the broader social care field, including work with the elderly and other forms of service.

I have divided my article into 5 parts:

1. The nature of child and youth care work
2. The dimensions of personal/professional development (KSS model)
3. The process of staff development
4. The process of supervision
5. Agency leadership

## 1. THE NATURE OF CHILD AND YOUTH CARE WORK

What is it that we want staff to develop to do? Or, in other words, what is the nature of child and youth care? I believe that professional child and youth care work is a unique, complex, and essential approach to caring for children

and youth in modern society which can be defined by a cluster of characteristics. Taken together, these characteristics differentiate this profession from other allied human service disciplines. Although some of these characteristics are shared with some other disciplines, the particular cluster is unique to child and youth care work. **(a) Child and youth care is primarily focussed on the growth and development of children and youth.** While families, communities, and organisations are important concerns for child and youth care professionals, these are viewed as contexts for the care of children. For us, the development of children and youth is the very heart of the matter.

**(b) Child and youth care is concerned with the totality of child development and functioning.** The focus is on persons living through a certain portion of the human life cycle, rather than on one facet of functioning as is characteristic of other human service disciplines. For example, physiotherapists and physicians are concerned primarily with physical health, psychiatrists and psychologists with mental health, probation officers with criminal behaviour, teachers with cognitive development, and so on. Only the emerging field of gerontology appears to share child and

youth care's concern with a portion of the life cycle as a totality. With such a holistic perspective, we specialise in being generalists. We cannot work alone, and need to work closely with a variety of other professionals.

**(c) Child and youth care has developed a model of social competence rather than a pathology-based orientation to child development.** This is sometimes referred to as a "developmental perspective". Child and youth care workers believe that children are doing the best they can at any given moment, and that we can best assist the child by working toward "the next step", by building on existing strengths and abilities.

The writings of such pioneers as Pestalozzi, Montessori, Korczak, and Makarenko demonstrate this orientation.

**(d) Child and youth care is based on (but not restricted to) direct, day to day work with children and youth in their environment.** Unlike many other professionals, child and youth care practitioners do not operate in a single setting, or on an interview or sessional basis. We work "on the coal face", as they say in the UK, (or "in the trenches" as they say in the US) at all hours, and we go to where the child is, as determined by the needs of the child. As such, we work in residential centres, schools, hospitals, family

homes, day programmes, and on the streets.

Although child and youth workers also assume supporting roles, such as supervising, directing, training, policy making and researching, they remain grounded in the direct care work.

**(e) Child and youth care involves the development of therapeutic relationships with children, their families, and other informal and formal helpers.** Such therapeutic relationships lie at the very centre of our work, and they combine the richness and intimacy of the "personal" with the rigour and goal-directedness of the "professional".

The development of such therapeutic relationships requires an integration of a complex constellation of knowledge, skills, and elements of self. In short, it requires a high level of personal/professional development on the part of the worker.

## 2. PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

To aid in the development of our educational curriculum in the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria, the teaching staff developed a simple graphic model illustrating the relationship of four key elements: knowledge, skills, self, and performance. The focus of all our work is on effective performance in the tasks of child and youth care, i.e., on doing high quality work. There is an essential need for balance across the areas of knowledge, skills, and self. We cannot afford to ignore any of these dimensions, and the particular combination in various courses and training opportunities needs to be carefully constructed to suit the tasks and concepts being addressed. In some curriculum models, the "self" component appears as "attitudes" or values". As will be articulated below, we believe these constructs are too limited, and a full articulation and exploration of "self" is required.

In child and youth care training, personal development and professional development cannot be separated, hence the use of the term "personal/professional".

**(a) Self:** Central to the educational process for child and youth care is self-awareness, sense of self, and development of self. Therefore, it is necessary to have an explicitly articulated model of what constitutes self-awareness. Frances Ricks (1989) has developed a model for addressing self-awareness in a systematic fashion which has proven effective with students in child and youth care educational programmes.

On one side are beliefs, values and ethics. These, together, constitute the inner "life position", or "worldview" of the worker/person.

A *belief* is defined as a tenet, or a set of tenets, that one holds as true.

A *value* is what one holds as important or good. A value reflects an assessment of worth which implies implicit beliefs about the world.

*Ethics* are standards or rules that guide one's life, and which govern one's expectations about how others ought to behave. Ethics are also tied to values and beliefs. In brief, our functioning as human beings/workers is guided by our particular constellation of beliefs, values, and ethics.

On the other side are thoughts, feelings and actions, which together constitute our individual "styles" of presentation, or "postures", in the world.

Our *thoughts* are the cognitive elements, our *feelings* are the emotional aspects, and our *actions* are our actual behaviours, or what we do. At any point in time, all three aspects are present.

This model can be used to examine and uncover aspects of one's self by providing a kind of map to assist in exploration. For example, if one becomes aware of a personal behaviour that one does not like, or does not understand, one can trace back through the related thoughts and feelings to the underlying beliefs, values and ethics, thereby enhancing one's self-awareness.

Usually, the involvement of another person trained in the use of this model who is supportive, yet challenging, provides the optimal context for self-discovery and, thus, the opportunity for personal growth and change.

**(b) Skills:** The concept of skill is often used quite casually, and even carelessly, in the literature on child and youth care practice. As with the notion of self-awareness, it deserves in-depth consideration. A skill is a complex phenomenon which has been analysed by Marcia Hills (1989) into four essential elements.

**Contextual awareness:** Every situation is bound by its context, and at any given moment, child and youth care workers experience a situation with all of its nuances. Some of these nuances are more prominent than others because of the context within which they occur. The ability to recognise the salient features in a given situation is termed contextual awareness.

**Discretionary Decision-Making:** In any situation there is a multitude of possible responses. Child and youth care workers need to choose one response from all these possibilities. The response they select is based on their judgement about what would be most effective in the situation. The ability to make decisions with discretion is what constitutes an intelligent action.

**Performance:** The behavioural component of skillfulness, referred to here as "performance", is often the prime focus of professional training programmes. This critical component involves the ability of child and youth care workers to demonstrate specific behaviour or techniques.

**Confidence:** Workers must have faith and confidence in their own abilities and interventions. Professionals must trust in their ability to make sound judgements and decisions, and perform effectively.

In summary, the terms skill, skilful and skilfulness imply the presence of these four interdependent elements. How skilful a child and youth care worker is depends on the degree to which these four interconnected elements are present. The question now arises, how is skill developed across these four areas? For education and training in skill development, experience is the key.

"Experience", as used here, refers not simply to "putting in time", but rather refers to the

process of deriving new learning from participation in practical situations. Hence, some workers who claim "nine years' experience" may have had no more than one year of experience repeated nine times, while others may have had nine years of real experience. Briefly summarised:

**The Beginner** is somewhat awkward in performance, generally acts on context-free rules, and lacks a sense of context and confidence in own abilities.

**The Novice** begins to recognise meaningful elements in the context, but still makes use of general rules, and tends to lack confidence.

**The Competent worker** becomes more confident as the quality and quantity of experiences increase, performs consistently at a satisfactory level, and is beginning to develop intuition (i.e., in-the-moment recognition of patterns and similarities).

**The Proficient worker** sees situations as a whole, is quite confident, has well-developed intuition, and performs consistently at more than acceptable level.

**The Expert** has thoroughly integrated skills and demonstrates a strong level of performance based on intuitive understanding. In order to assist the worker, or student, to develop skilfulness, the supervisor or instructor needs to create an atmosphere of acceptance, empathy, and respect. At the same time, a sense of ambiguity, or "not knowing", needs to be created in order for learning to take place. Experimental instruction and guidance is also important, as is assistance for the discovery of personal meaning (i.e. self-exploration in relation to situations) by the worker.

**(c) Knowledge:** Knowledge elements are generally quite well addressed in most curricula, and a rather typical, or generic, list would include items such as the following:

- Theoretical approaches to behaviour change
- Human growth and development
- Assessment principles and methods
- Case planning and management frameworks

***"The salary levels and social prestige of child and youth care workers tend to be at the lower end of the scale relative to other occupations. Therefore, it is vitally important that the quality of working life be experienced as high".***

- Communication theory
- Principles and models of intervention
- Research and case/programme evaluation principles and processes
- Professional ethics and issues in current practice
- Legislation and policies
- Atypical development and behaviour.

These knowledge areas need to be introduced not just in the classroom, but in conjunction with the exploration of self and the development of skills; that is, as part of an integrated process of staff (or student) development.

### **3. THE PROCESS OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

In order to understand the process of staff development, it is important to know what workers are expected to do. In conjunction with a survey of child and youth care worker training needs, the author developed a catalogue of job functions as listed below.

#### **A. Direct Service to Clients**

1. Individual intervention, counselling or therapy
2. Group intervention, counselling or therapy
3. In-home family intervention, counselling or therapy
4. Office-based family intervention, counselling or therapy
5. Assessment of child
6. Assessment of family
7. Child management

- 8 Child abuse work
- 9 Employment counselling or assistance
- 10 Life skills training
- 11 Health management
- 12 Education remediation
- 13 Recreational leadership
- 14 Arts and crafts leadership
- 15 Counselling on death and dying
- 16 Therapeutic play
- 17 Parenting skill training
- 18 Sexuality counselling
- 19 Marriage counselling
- 20 Stress management
- 21 Lifestyle modification.

**B. Organisational Activities**

- 1 Case management
- 2 Client contracting
- 3 Report writing and formal recording
- 4 Court appearances/legal documentation
- 5 Programme planning and development
- 6 Use and interpretation of policy
- 7 Individual consultation with other professionals
- 8 Participation in professional teams
- 9 Co-ordination of professional teams
- 10 Contracting for services
- 11 Supervision of staff, students or volunteers
- 12 Staff training and development
- 13 Public relations/community education
- 14 Organisational analysis and development
- 15 Policy analysis and development
- 16 Financial analysis/budgeting
- 17 Case or programme evaluation
- 18 Research.

These lists of 21 Direct Service functions and 18 Organisational Activity functions serve several purposes. First, they enable workers, employers and trainers to articulate what it is child and youth workers do. Second, they facilitate communication with those in other fields concerning the real complexity and sophistication of the child and youth care role. Third, they enable the systematic collection of information on job functions and training needs of workers over time. Other listings are, of course, possible. However, this particular list has proven a useful framework within the North American

context over the past ten years.

The process of staff development can be characterised by stages and a differential emphasis on various job functions over time.

As outlined in the box on the right, recent research by Jack Phelan (1990) has revealed three major stages corresponding to the first three years of professional practice. It is particularly important for programme supervisors to recognise four aspects of the process of staff development.

1. There are relatively predictable, sequential stages in worker development.
2. The needs for education and training can be usefully analysed and documented using a job function analytical framework.
3. The critical training needs differ for workers at different stages of development.
4. Sensitive supervision based upon an understanding of the process of staff development can significantly enhance the quality of a staff member's working life.

**4. THE PROCESS OF SUPERVISION**

Experience and research in the area of supervision indicate that four elements are critical for effective supervision.

1. **It is goal-directed.** Both the worker and the supervisor are clear about the outcomes being sought.
2. **It is contractual.** There is a process of mutual discussion and negotiation resulting in an agreed approach and desired outcomes.
3. It is based on an interpersonal relationship. The supervisor and worker need to develop a base of mutual trust and respect.
4. **It is between a worker and an immediate superior.** There needs to be a close proximity between the two parties in terms of ongoing experience and responsibility. Further, an integrated process of supervision will encompass three aspects of practice: job responsibilities (what needs to be done), performance (how is it to be done), and the organisational context (what supports and constraints exist in the workplace). Research also

The Process of Staff Development in Three Major Stages

**THE FIRST THREE YEARS OF PRACTICE**

<i>Stage</i>	<i>Functions</i>
<i>1. Initial Stage (1st Year)</i>	
- helpless confusion	- limit setting
- theories discarded in favour of pragmatic control techniques	- rule enforcement
- feeling competent	- behaviour management
- survival postures	- group management
	- competence in daily routines
	- role modelling
<i>2. Beginning Professionalism (2nd Year)[or exit]</i>	
- either (1) perfect initial skill (repetition) ⇒ boredom ⇒ exit or (2) new appreciation of professional expertise	- individually-oriented clinical skills
- role of supervisor is crucial	- communication skills
- increase in expertise and self-awareness	- personality integration
- acquiring new skills	- treatment planning
- re-appreciation of theory	- use of developmental theory
- can explain what they are doing and why they are doing it	
<i>3. Competent Professional (3rd Year)</i>	
- development of a holistic framework	- assessment
	- co-ordinator of services to child/youth
	- family counselling
	- more research/experimental orientation to learning
	- begin assisting in staff training

indicates that effective supervision is the single most important practice within a caregiving organisation for ensuring high quality client knowledge. A key to effective supervision appears to lie in assisting workers to develop self-control and to develop skills, rather than in simply managing staff behaviour and setting limits for staff. That is, there is a need to foster internal motivation rather than to create improved external motivators.

**5. AGENCY LEADERSHIP**

- No matter how small or large the social care organisation, the following agency leadership behaviours appear to be important in fostering a positive environment for staff development.
- (a) Establishment of a long-range plan (2-4 years)
  - (b) Development and implementation of yearly goals and objectives
  - (c) Recognition and reward for

- good performance
- (d) Involvement of all staff in policy development
- (e) Design of a safe and orderly environment for all staff
- (f) Creation and maintenance of an effective supervisory system

**6. CONCLUSION**

The salary levels and social prestige of child and youth care workers tend to be at the lower end of the scale relative to other occupations. Therefore, it is vitally important that the quality of working life be experienced as high. The prime contributor to such a sense of quality appears to be a positive experience of personal/professional growth and development, and such an experience is best fostered by strong agency leadership characterised by an understanding of the elements and stages of staff development and the provision of effective staff supervision process.

Whatever on-going developmental, educational or clinical tasks we may be busy with in our children's institutions, none of us (children or staff) can ignore the broader social, political and economic transformation under way in South Africa — and, in particular, the momentous national events which unfold almost daily at this time. How are children managing this — especially children in care whose personal and family lives, quite apart from the national scenario, are already vulnerable and uncertain? We contacted a small number of institutions around South Africa to ask some specific questions ...

# Children living through change in South Africa

## How are the children handling the uncertainties?

Die algemene gevoel by die kinders spruit uit die hoorsê van ouers tuis en dus het elkeen geen duidelike beeld van wat aangaan nie, want hulle hoor elkeen 'n eensydige storie.

Most of the children who could understand what is happening politically said that they handled uncertainty by talking about it. Apparently by asking others what they felt gave them a feeling of not being the only ones feeling the pressures.

I don't know, I don't care, I can't really do anything about it; what I feel isn't going to change the country. The children participate by singing and toying with a view to helping in bringing change and seem to be happy in doing so. They attend rallies and funerals. The children appear confused and don't understand the reasons for what is happening. Some are fearful for their families. They are upset by violent outbursts.

The children realise that the children's home is a place of hope, but what is going on in the country is affecting them and bringing insecurity — especially in not being able to go to school. They see their education as an important factor

in their future and they are confused at not seeing any real change in the country.

The children intellectualise: 'There is no peace anywhere' they say. They deny: 'What violence? It's no worse than other countries'. Some said everyone's lifestyle has changed. One said he was scared.

Ons is nie onseker of beangs oor 'n 1994 of nuwe Suid-Afrika nie en is aanvaardend tov. die beleidsveranderinge wat moontlik in ons land mag kom.

Both staff and children are uncertain about developments. We talk about this and watch the news together. Some would like to help but don't know what to do.

Many are trying to get the violence in context — but then are terrified by the constant dramatic TV images.

Some children in an Athlone children's home: I feel not so good. I feel frightened because I don't know where this will all end. Ons moet vir mekaar lief hê en vir mekaar se regte opstaan.

## What are the children saying?

Unless everyone can have the opportunity to vote for the leaders or the government of their choice, the violence will continue.

They feel protected in the children's home, but fear for their

families.

They discuss ways of protecting themselves against violence and crime.

The children say they want the same rights and privileges as those enjoyed by their white counterparts, for example, white schools have cleaners but black schools have no cleaners.

Younger ones talk 'tough': if they are attacked they will attack back. Older ones speak out for peace and real equality. Geweld en mense-slagting is vir ons onaanvaarbaar en kan nie goedgepraat word nie. Dat vrede en aanvaarding van mekaar se regte en menswaardigheid moet kom, is vir ons belangrik.

Some of the children have been brought up in racist homes and still exhibit this. Often it is fear that they will be personally involved in black/white violence.

Hulle voel onseker oor die toekoms en weet nie wat in die toekoms sal gebeur nie. Hulle is egter nie negatief daaroor nie en is steeds optimisties oor 'n goeie toekoms vir ons in hierdie land. Geen probleme met ander rasse in die skool nie.

Met die huidige onsekerheid in ons land is hul grootste vrees: sal ons eendag 'n beroep kan beoefen omdat werkseleentehede so skaars is; dat ons as blankes onderdruk sal word deur die anderskleuriges soos hulle vir jare deur die blankes

onderdruk was. Many talk of the violence, the bombings, the killings. Still others said that they really became scared when other people spoke about it. They wished there was equality in the country and that there were no 'anti' feelings between whites and blacks. They pick up political groupings (the whites, the ANC) as 'unfair', 'good' or 'bad' — even as young as eight. We are feeling very uncomfortable because we may not have school for the next few months, and we didn't do anything wrong. The children are confused about violence: 'Die ANC moet die wittes doodmaak', 'I feel very heartsore because killing is not nice' and 'I am unhappy about fighting'.

## What are we as child care workers doing to help?

We have workshops with the children over issues such as human rights, democracy, political principles such as one person, one vote.

We have to instill both knowledge and reassurance. Continuing to encourage inter-racial contacts and activities to dispel fears and myths, understanding our differences and similarities. We have to answer questions honestly (and age-appropriately), and above all to acknowledge the



Two of the frames from Merle van Dijk's excellent poster

angers and fears so that we can help deal with them. Ons probeer om 'n gesindheid van samewerking en onderhandelings te skep. We need to keep children well-informed. They often have exaggeratedly negative ideas. We encourage the children to understand that their opinions are important, as is the way they behave. One theme is: 'Change begins with me.' Om die kinders te help kan ons hulle probeer kalmeer en gerusstel ... kan ons meer gereed met hulle praat oor politieke situasies en aan hulle verduidelik presies wat gebeur. Soms voel vreemd met die idee dat swart en bruin kinders moontlik saam met hulle by die kindershuis sal woon — maar tog sien hul kans daarvoor aangesien vier van hulle reeds bruin dogtertjies by die skool as maats het. Ek moenie die huidige politieke veranderinge en onsekerheid weerhou van kinders nie, maar dit op 'n subtiele manier aan hul oordra. Alle vrae wat na my toe kom moet op die bes moontlike manier beantwoord word. Dit is baie belangrik hoe ons as kinderversorgers optree: as ons positief is, sal ons ook die kinders tot positiewe aanspoor, maar as ons negatief teenoor die veranderinge staan, sal ons dit ook aan die kinders oordra. As a staff member I have initiated discussion about the political situation in our country and allowed the children to express their feelings and ask questions. This has enabled me to clarify certain issues for them and to reassure them. From a practical point of view, we are also helping children to be sensible about safety when away from the children's home. As kinderversorger probeer ek 'n baie objektiewe siening uitdra.

### How could child care staff be more helpful?

We could be encouraging the children to attend school for education to prepare for their part in a non-racial South Africa. Teach them to respect the rights of other people, for example, that it would not be right to grab and loot other people's property.

We can listen more carefully to their concerns and answer their questions. We can watch the news with them and explain what is being said. Preparation for times of crisis is important. Staff must remain as calm and objective as possible so as not to create further anxiety. We need to come to terms with our own feelings about change, for only then can we be of help to the children. To educate the children about the various political parties and alternatives. Sensible planning and advice about safety helps children feel more secure. Enige insident, konsensus, rigting-wysiging of nuwe beleid moet aan ons personeel en kinders geïnterpreteer word sonder om dit te verpolitiseer. Die kindershuis is deel van die land, gemeenskap en strukture. Indien 'n kindershuis sy gemeenskap en onmiddellike omgewing wil bedien, sal die gemeenskap en onmiddellike omgewing dus ondersoek moet word om vas te stel wie is die gemeenskap, wat is sy behoeftes en hoe kan daar in hierdie behoeftes voorsien word.

There needs to be continued integration of cultures and learning more about each other. Important to encourage spiritual growth and biblical principles. Groupwork is a useful model to handle such issues as the history of apartheid, the reasons for the unrest and cultural norms and values. Involve the police to teach safety measures and teach the children to be aware of danger. As children learn more about other cultures, so we as child care workers should be showing them by our own behaviour how to accept and respect other people and their rights. Moedig kinders aan om TV programme en koerantberigte te lees ten opsigte van verandering. Dit gee hulle kans om vrae te vra en ek moet kommunikasiekanale oophou.

### There is a future

We are wrong to concentrate only on the immediate difficulties. We offer the children no

hope if we don't demonstrate ourselves that there is a future beyond apartheid. Our profession is about growth and development: we must be creative, innovative and enthusiastic about our profession. Deur gesprekvoering het dit aan die lig gekom dat hul seker voel dat ons in Suid-Afrika is 'n Christen volk en land en God sal nooit Sy kinders verlore laat gaan nie — ons moet net baie sterk wees in ons Geloof. The overall response was that each one was dealing with his or her feelings by talking with others — explaining how they felt and listening to each other. There has been a remarkable improvement regarding racist attitudes and expressions over the past three or four years — cause for great optimism.

The principal of a school of industries sounded the most practical note: 'We are concentrating more on courses offering catering skills. Whatever else may happen in the new South Africa, we will all still have to eat!'

**Thanks to the following for participating in this feature:** Abraham Kriel Kinderhuis, Nylstroom  
Durbanville Kinderhuis  
Epworth Children's Home, Germiston  
Ethelbert Children's Home, Durban  
Khayelethemba Children's Home, Ciskei  
King William's Town Children's Home  
Leliebloem House, Cape Town  
Masikhule Children's Home, Cape Town  
Teen Centre, Rondebosch, Cape Town



*We can listen more carefully to their concerns and answer their questions. We can watch the news with them and explain what is being said.*



Losing and regaining one's personal and cultural identity: **Virginia Burton** contributes her story to the English magazine *Who Cares?*

## Looking back at my Childhood in Care

I'm Virginia and I'd like to tell you a bit about my life. I'm 43 now, the mother of a wonderful 17-year-old daughter, and a social worker myself. But things were very different when I was 13 ... My mum and dad lived in Vienna, Austria and were Jewish. They managed to get to England when the Second World War came. At first they were put in a special camp because Austrians were seen as enemies. After the war, dad could not get a job and began to think everyone was a Nazi, out to get him. He went into a psychiatric hospital and never came out again.

My mum looked after me on the benefit money she received, but she was very sad and lonely. When I was 6, she got cancer and

died when I was 13. No-one explained that she was dying and we never said goodbye. I still miss her, and feel unhappy about this. Both my mum and dad were orthodox Jews: my dad became vegetarian and stayed so in hospital so as not to break the food laws. My mum and I went to synagogue every week: I learned about Judaism and Hebrew each weekend.

About 6 months after my mum died I went into care. I remember my social worker well — she was very kind but she came from a different world. Once we went shopping to buy me some clothes. She pointed to a chauffeur-driven Rolls going by and said that was her husband inside. I quickly learnt

not to tell her anything important. I decided to put her off by talking instead about all the other 'poor children' she looked after. So that's how we never talked about where I would go to live.

All my mum's things (and some of mine too) were got rid of. I was sent to a boarding school and in the holidays to a foster family. I was very, very unhappy there. They were seen as very respectable, with a big house and two much younger adopted children. They were not Jewish. They didn't do anything that was I used to — different food, clothes, hobbies — and they wanted me to change. I remember they used to switch off my bedroom light when they decided I should go to sleep. My mum had never done that, even though we'd been very hard up and lived in a tiny flat where what I did affected her. I felt they were wiping out my mum and my past. She was never talked about, nor my being Jewish and no-one took me to see my dad. (My mum had visited him three times a week, had done all his washing and some cooking till she got too ill).

I became very unhappy and angry. When I left school, the foster family said they didn't want me any longer as I was 'too difficult'. I went to stay with lots of different friends and then in shared flats and bed-sitting rooms.

### ARE THINGS DIFFERENT NOW?

About two years ago, I decided I'd like to read my file. I wrote to the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames where I was in care. John Jones, the Principal Officer,

waskind, and because I wanted to photocopy so much of the file, he said it would be easier to give me the whole file. It was agreed with the Social Services Committee that I should have it at home on 'permanent loan'. I hope other young people will get to keep their files in this way.

After I left care, I went to a university and would occasionally get bits of money from Richmond. But when I wanted a lease on a flat so as to have a permanent home at last, they refused.

I thought how little care has changed: leaving or being 'looked after' as it is now called, should be able to have a safe, permanent place to live.

I also thought a lot about being Jewish and whether the new Children Act will make any difference. It says care authorities must pay attention to race, culture and language of the children they look after. When I went into care, I was confused about lots of things, including being Jewish. If asked at the time whether I wanted to be in a Jewish family, I would probably have said it didn't matter.

But the result of that was that it took me over twenty years to find my way back to a comfortable connection with, and to identify with, Judaism. What I needed was a family with a good Jewish lifestyle, but who didn't push it down my throat or make me join in. I wonder whether other young people's confusion or unhappiness, together with a lack of choice of carers, will in future still be made the excuse for not meeting the needs of those looked after in care. What do you think?

### Child Care Supervisor

Required for Twilight Children, a project for street children in Hillbrow, Johannesburg. The candidate will preferably have a degree, suitable qualifications in child care/supervision and some years' working experience. Task to manage and develop twelve child care workers, reporting directly to Manager. Non-residential position. Salary commensurate with qualifications and experience. Post CV to Mike Pritchard, P.O. Box 650843, Benmore 2010

## Twilight Children

With strong emphasis recently in South African practice on work with families, **Naomi Karp** challenges us to more authenticity in family services

# Working with Families: From Myth to Reality

Over the past decade, the field of children's mental health has undergone a series of changes which are upgrading the quality of services delivered to children who have emotional, behavioural, and mental disorders, and their families. Gradually, mental health service providers are shedding traditional roles and are examining the ways in which they approach and communicate with families. Instead of "we" and "they", professionals and families gradually are becoming partners in the therapeutic process.

The Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health grew out of a 1988 "Next Steps" conference convened by Portland State University and the US Department of Education. The goal of that conference was to set an agenda for children's mental health. Subsequently, seventeen family members decided to meet again to form a national organisation that was the beginning of the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, the first advocacy organisation dedicated solely to children's mental health and family-support issues. Now, four years later, the Federation has a strong impact on improving services, policies, and laws affecting children with mental health disorders and their families.

## Policy and practice

Unfortunately for families and children, educators often do not live up to legislative requirements to collaborate with

families (West, 1989), and persons who deliver mental health services have no mandate to form partnerships with families. Therefore, families would like to have the professional disciplines understand what is meant when families talk about "partnerships" and "collaboration". Checklists to test these perceptions are printed on this page. These checklists challenge both professionals and families to approach each other in ways that embody values of respect, consideration, and empathy for others. A Vermont parent perhaps best summarises why family-professional collaboration, based on family-centred principles, is important: "Parents should be

thought of as scholars of experience. We are in it for the distance ... We have our doctorate in perseverance. We and the system must be in concert or the vision shrinks" (D. Sylvester, cited in Thousand and Villa, 1989).

## Families today

The composition of the modern family (in American and probably in many others) is no longer the stereotypical "mom, dad, and two kids, and a dog." Rather, a family may be a single parent who relies on a maternal grandmother for child care; a teen-age couple who speak little English; or any configuration of people living under the same roof. Therefore it is essential that mental health providers think about "parent" collaboration in new ways. One of the first steps toward a new way of thinking is to use new language. The term "parents" should be replaced with "family" since so many children do not live with both parents or, in many cases, with either parent. A comprehensive, inclusive definition of "family" should be used when mental health professionals are trying to collaborate with adults who are responsible for a child's well-being. The following definition was adopted by family leaders from across the country at a recent Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) conference:

**A family is a group of people who are important to each other and offer each other love and support, especially in times of crisis. In order to be sensitive to the wide range of life styles, living arrangements, and cultural variations that exist today, the family in OSERS programmes can no longer be limited to just parent/child relationships. Family involvement ... must reach out to include: mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, grandparents, neighbours, and other persons who have important roles in the lives of people with disabilities. (Family and Integration Resources, 1991).**

## Positive language

Support is a key ingredient for family success and coping. Families of children with emotional and behavioural problems would like to see the term "dysfunctional family" erased from the vocabularies of professionals. Service systems are inflexible and not responsive to families' individual needs. They create unnecessary stress and overwhelming responsibilities for families. Professionals often misperceive families as being "dysfunctional" when these families are, in fact, experiencing normal reactions to the serious lack of appropriate, affordable, accessible, community-based services and

### Collaboration Checklist for Professionals

- Do I really believe that parents are my equal, and, in fact, are experts on their child?
- Do I show the same respect for the value of families' time as I do for my own time by educating myself about an individual child's case before appointments or group sessions?
- Do I speak plainly and avoid professional jargon?
- Do I actively involve parents in developing a plan of action and then review, evaluate, and revise the plan with the family?
- Do I make appointments and provide services at times and places convenient for the family?
- Do I share information with other professionals to ensure that services are not duplicated and that families do not expend unnecessary energy searching for services and providers?

### Collaboration Checklist for Families

- Do I believe I am an equal partner with professionals and that I do my share of problem solving and planning to help my child?
- Do I clearly express my own needs and the needs of my family to professionals in an assertive manner?
- Do I treat each professional as an individual and avoid letting past negative experiences get in the way of a good working relationship?
- Do I communicate quickly with professionals when significant changes and events occur?
- When I make a commitment to a professional for a plan of action, do I follow through and complete the commitment?
- Do I maintain realistic expectations for professionals, myself, and my child?



***The composition of the modern family is no longer the stereotypical "mom, dad, and two kids, and a dog." Rather, a family may be a single parent who relies on a maternal grandmother for child care; a teen-age couple who speak little English; or any configuration of people living under the same roof.***

supports. It is service systems that are dysfunctional when they do not respond to families' needs. The term "dysfunctional family" is the system's way of blaming someone else and must not be used. Additionally, families would like professionals not to "assess the family's deficits" and dwell on them. Rather, they would like professionals to talk with them and to find out what types of services and supports would build on the family's strengths, and really make a difference in the lives of the whole family. Further, families want professionals to share their visions and expectations for children. Daring to dream about what might be, in terms of services and outcomes, is an essential part of a sound, collaborative partnership.

#### **Common values**

True family-professional collaboration can be built only on a shared set of values about children and families. Here are some examples of values that teams may want to affirm jointly:

- All children and youth are to be valued as people.
- All children and youth have strengths and can learn to make positive contributions to their families, friends and society.
- All families have a variety of strengths and coping styles that should be identified and enhanced.
- Diversity and individual differences are to be valued and respected.
- The values, choices, and preferences of families should be respected.
- Families are sources of wisdom and knowledge about their children and should be recognised as experts.

After professionals have jointly developed a set of values about children and families, displaying them in a place where families can see them will help lay the foundation for collaborative partnerships. The next task is to put our values into practice. It is of paramount importance to develop strategies that will include families from all cultures and all walks of life as equal partners in their children's treatment programmes.

#### **Asking parents to help**

As a final note, families increasingly are asked to serve on local, state, and national policy-making boards and councils. Most family members are delighted and honoured to be asked to serve. However, families across the country are voicing a number of common complaints. These problems and our timelines for solutions are listed below:  
*Only one family member is invited to serve on a board.* This can be intimidating to the solitary "non-professional" in the group. Tokenism of any kind cannot be tolerated. Therefore, balanced representation on boards and councils is desired by the year 2000.

*Conferences frequently have a "family theme," but no family members are invited to plan the conference, present their views or participate in a major or minor way.* To have a meeting about families and to not include families is like studying anatomy without a body.

By the year 2000, families would like to be equal partners in such conferences and meetings.

*Families participate on boards and councils but are not compensated for their time.* Child care, transportation, time away from one's job, and a host of other factors are not considered when families are asked to devote many hours to improving systems and policies. Families' consulting skills have to be recognised and paid for just as any professional is compensated for her or his time.

*Families participate on boards and councils, but their ideas and opinions frequently are discounted.* For example, large numbers of families said

that they took part in developing their states' official planning structures. However, many families' ideas never appeared in the finished proposals. This is another form of tokenism that families would like to see obliterated long before the year 2000.

Family-professional collaboration is a concept whose time has come. It is not going to go away or become weakened over time. All that families ask is to be treated respectfully and as equal partners; no more, no less.

*Naomi Karp is a founding member of the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, and a parent of two children, one with special needs. She worked for the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation for over ten years.*

This article is reprinted from the *Journal of Emotional and Behavioural Problems*, Winter 1993.

## *Professional Child Care Worker*

Boys' Town Verulam (Durban) requires a married couple who have or have had their own children. You will be required to care for and work with ten boys in a multi-cultural family-oriented community home. The husband must have outside employment and be comfortable with assuming an active level of involvement with the boys.

The wife must be willing to work within the context of a multi-professional team, preferably hold a qualification within the field of child and youth care, and be in possession of a valid driver's licence.

This exacting, challenging and exciting opportunity will require of you a high energy level, enthusiasm for work with children and youth, and a willingness to learn and develop personally.

Please contact Mrs Gita Surajnaryan on telephone (031) 505-6921



This journal receives frequent feedback from child care workers, but the Editorial Board wondered if children in care had anything to say to readers. We invited eight of them around to dinner and talked ...

# What the kids say about care

Collect eight children in a room and you get a gripe session, right? Wrong. Our visitors were a randomly picked group, aged twelve to nineteen, from four children's homes in Cape Town. They had been in care for between three months and five years, and the initial uncertainty and politeness soon mellowed into some straight talk. There was no doubt about their contentment with their respective children's homes. For each one, as they frankly shared the circumstances which led to their placement, the children's home had been experienced as a helpful and valued solution.

## Preoccupations

One almost expected to hear such a group complaining about the food, the curfews, the stigma, or the staff. But there was none of this. Uppermost in the minds of all eight of our visitors were their very strong concerns and hurts about what had happened to

their families and homes. For all of them, there had been bereavements, rejections or separations which left them with a degree of pain which which they still struggle. The natural exuberance of a group of youngsters was subdued as they listened to each other with obvious recognition for each other's experiences and feelings. One thing was clear: these young people no doubt continue to work each day at their on-going life routines and school tasks, but they carry with them a serious burden of loss and residual feeling over what has happened to them. Is there anything, they were asked, that they would like their child care workers to be better at? To help us more, they replied, with this pain.

## Programmes and systems

All children's homes work out ways of compensating for the obvious shortcomings of group living compared with ordinary family life. How do we

ensure that there are enough adults to go around? How do we cover all the bases for each child and avoid missing some of them out? How do we manage all of the household demands without getting too institutional? What rules and systems do we implement to balance between safety and order on the one hand, and individuality and room to grow on the other?

All of the children in this group had a good grasp of the arrangements which governed their lives, and they appeared to have 'bought into' the various systems. "We have a weekend planning programme for those who cannot go home." "We are allowed to take Saturday morning jobs to earn money." "We have a key-worker system so that child care workers have a small group for which they are responsible." "We have a foster care plan for children who will probably never go home again." "We have a life-skills programme to help us with that." "We have a senior system whereby we help with the younger kids." "We have a security system at our gate when it's unsafe in the local township." "We're allowed to visit friends in the neighbourhood after school".

Behind all of this there was a strong sense of caring and protective adults who are actively concerned about them and who take trouble for them. There was clearly also much talking between child care workers and children which helped them make sense of what happened in their lives, which explained things, which encouraged. For example, child care workers helped to reconstrue failures as learning, helped youngsters to see disappointments as common human experiences and opportunities to try something new.

What about helping out with the chores? "Well obviously we do that, help with cleaning, feeding the dog." "Often we older ones are asked to help with younger kids — and we're expected to set an example to them." "When you are asked to help with other children, it makes you feel special, because when things come out right, you feel more self-confident yourself."



*I sometimes envy other children at home ... but if I had the choice today, I would choose the children's home. I have learned a lot there, especially about getting on with people.*

## THREE ISSUES

When the purpose of the group was explained, we suggested that it could be an opportunity for young people in care to say something which they thought was important to child care workers generally. Was there anything which they would like child care workers to know more about, to read more about, to be better at? There are, it seems, some constructive criticisms which child care workers might take to heart.

## Home visits

There was a discussion about the way in which social workers or departmental authorities approved arrangements for home leave. It was fully accepted that adults wanted to ensure that overnight or holiday placements would be safe and pleasant, and this was ap-

## ON RELATING TO OTHERS AT SCHOOL

"Many are actually jealous of us. They wish they could stay in a home."  
"Some look down on us. 'You have no parents?!' They throw your back-ground in your face."  
"I was at first ashamed at being in a home. I expected others to make fun of me. But when I did tell them, they really understood and were interested. It was OK"





*I like child care workers. If it wasn't for them, where would we be? They could have done other jobs like nursing or teaching, but they work with us, always there to listen, to help, to encourage ...*

preciated. However sometimes enquiries were insensitive and bureaucratic. "We like to keep to ourselves the private fact that we have had family problems." "My grandmother was embarrassed and hurt that a social worker had to go sniffing around her flat just because she had offered to have me for the weekend. She felt that there was something unsatisfactory about her." "Friends in our street knew that people had come checking up on my home."

#### ON FREEDOM

"I thought it was going to be like a jail, but it's really very nice."

"My own mother never let me go out, but the children's home is more realistic."

"Of course you have to earn the freedom: you have to be old enough, you have to be trusted. If there's a party or something, the child care workers will check up to see that an adult will be in charge."

"At home if I broke a trust they would keep on at me about it. The child care staff will get over that and want to give me another chance."

"They won't let me go out by myself." (The youngest)

#### Future plans

When young people are admitted to care there is often confusion in their minds as to what, exactly, is happening to them. Adults may use words which the children do not understand, and the motives behind the removal and placement are not always clear — "Is this a positive move or am I being punished?" "This is not a time for people to pretend that nothing serious is happening." "I would like to know the truth. Are they hiding things from me? I need to know if things are going on behind my back." It seems that children need to see a reasonable stretch of the road ahead, for only in this way can they relax their watchfulness and get on with their lives. "Somebody said I would be in care just for a couple of weeks, and a few months later I am still here and nobody is telling me what is going to happen." This young person is not going to unpack his suitcase, for every day he is expecting another move. Give honest information about your plans for children.

#### Fairness

There is a certain ambivalence about the children's home situation: is it more like a (family) home or more like a school? Into this question comes the matter of 'fairness'. In a (family) home, children are treated as individuals and the treatment (for example, punishments and rewards) may therefore be different for each. In a school life is more formalised and regimented, and it is more important for children to be seen to be treated the same. Young people in care clearly have different ideas about where their children's home fits into this. For some, "different strokes for different blokes" is quite acceptable and there should be individual consequences for misdemeanours like coming home too late at night. But others feel that all punishments should be scrupulously fair and consistent.

There is no easy answer to this. It can have to do with the shape of the buildings and the programme, for example, does everybody tend to know what everybody else is doing? It can have to do with the developmental status of the

youngsters themselves, for example, who still needs external sanctions and who is more accepting of personal responsibility? Enough for child care workers to know that this is an issue, and to ensure that they know how everybody feels about the sanctions they apply in their unit.

#### "I was lucky ..."

Despite two or three areas of criticism, the attitudes of this group of eight children in care were overwhelmingly positive. The adults were seen as warm and welcoming, and all of them appeared to have cast their child care workers into roles with which they felt comfortable. "I take the child care worker as my parent. He is a male, he looks after us, he

plays soccer with us. He loves us, and we love him."

Another: "No staff member could take the place of my mother. I don't really look for a mother or father in the child care workers. My mother is my mother — but I don't live with her, and the child care workers are there to help me with that."

One said: "My father died and my mother left us at that time, leaving only my sister and I alone. One morning I went to play and when I came back my sister was also gone — I don't know where — and I was all alone. But I was lucky. My father's manager came to find out what happened to me, he took me to the welfare and so I came to the children's home. Now, I have a family."

## Teen Centre

has organised a two-day seminar for child care workers, principals, management committee members and social workers:

## FUTURE TRENDS AFFECTING CHILD CARE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Presenters will address questions including ...  
What does the future hold for the youth of today — spiritually, educationally, politically and in relation to career, economy and welfare?

#### Speakers include:

**Anthony Ryan**, Manager, Corporate Internal Marketing, Old Mutual  
**Chris Ahrends**, Sub-Dean, St George's Cathedral  
**Peter Broster**, Principal, Leaf College, Rondebosch  
**Vivien Taylor**, Regional Welfare Co-ordinator, ANC  
**Ronel de Villiers**, Head Vocational Counsellor, Manpower  
**Alister Duminy**, Quality Co-ordinator, Old Mutual

**The seminar will take place on Tuesday 29th and Wednesday 30 June 1993 from 8.30 to 4.30 pm at The Forum, Lower Mall, Cavendish Square, Claremont.**

Cost (includes lunch, teas, free parking) is **R50.00** per delegate. For further information and to register contact Chris Smith or Jane Payne at 689-2205 or 689-5961 before 18 June 1993

## Teen Centre



Campground Road, Rondebosch, Cape Town

# Lives at risk: The assassination of children and adolescents in Brazil

Published by the National Streetchildren's Movement, the Brazilian Institute for Social and Economic Analysis and the Centre for Studies on Violence, University of Sao Paulo

## Introduction

The murder of children and adolescents under the age of 18 has become a feature of everyday life in Brazil's cities. These assassinations occur with frightening regularity and increasing violence, in circumstances which indicate a level of deliberate planning behind many of them. What is especially alarming is the way in which the deaths of these young people are treated and assimilated by society, the media, the Government and those responsible for public security. A fundamental first step to developing strategies designed to change these attitudes, is to research in detail the nature of these crimes.

## Newspaper coverage

This study is based on the analysis of newspaper articles published during 1989 in the three places which have the highest incidence of violence against children and adolescents, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and Recife.

The newspapers chosen were O Dia (RJ), Noticias Populares (SP) and Diario de Pernambuco (Recife) because of their coverage — albeit often sensationalist — of urban violence, an issue which has only recently begun to receive much coverage in the major press. The information available from these papers was more complete and consistent than that available from official sources. It also revealed the level of indifference and ignorance which surrounds the deaths of children and adolescents. The great majority of articles concerning violence against young people are brief, often limited to a few lines in the police reports column, with no headline on the front page. The language used is usually crude and sensationalist.

## What the figures showed

Four hundred and twenty four cases were selected, 333 of which involved the murders of children and adolescents only. Of the total number of crimes reviewed, 196 took place in Sao Paulo, 162 in Rio de Janeiro, and 66 in Recife. The total number of children and adolescents killed in these crimes came to 457, according to the reports in the newspapers. In order to calculate the relationship between the number of children and adolescents whose murders appeared in the press and the number who lived in each area we used the 1987 National Household Sample Research (PNAD).

Proportionally, Recife showed the highest incidence, with 5.7 victims per 100,000, followed by Rio with 4.9 and Sao Paulo with 3.5.

The information available revealed both the high degree of violence with which the murders are being carried out and a level of confidence in their own impunity on the part of the perpetrators. 41% of the offenses involved either execution or multiple killings, and 17% of those involved physical mutilation of the victims. Most of the crimes (82%) were carried out with firearms. Almost half (47%) showed levels of violence in excess of that necessary simply to kill the victim — either use of multiple weapons or more commonly, several shots. The murders were carried out mainly on public land (49%) or in the home (16%) and the bodies of the murdered youngsters were usually left at the scene of the crime.

## Characteristics of the victims

"Streetkid, pick-pocket, thief." In general the media and society as a whole, portray the vic-

tims of these violent crimes in a negative light, 'criminilising' them as a way of accounting for their murder. As a result, their deaths are seen not as the deaths of children and adolescents, but as the elimination of yet another petty thief or streetchild who is a threat to the security of the rest of the population.

However the data collected in this study contradicts this 'certainty' of the criminality of the victims and raises serious criticisms of the 'clean-up tactics' and 'security measures' published in — and sometimes stimulated by — the media. There is, after all, no way in which the daily murder of children and adolescents should be justified and trivialised in such an inhumane fashion. The majority of the victims (390) were male. 336 of them were between the ages of 15 and 17, but it is important to note also the killings of children less than a year old (10), from one to ten years old (32) and between eleven and fourteen years old (66). In most cases there was no indication that the victims had any police record or had passed through any of the official institutions, nor that they were armed. Very few cases (11 out of 47) reported by the newspapers indicated the possession or consumption of drugs, and it is difficult to make any definitive or general observations about the victims' involvement in the drug trade. Of the 457 children and adolescents killed, only 13 are noted as drug traffickers, 9 as carriers/runners, and 9 as users.

Given the lack of detailed information available from the newspapers it is also significant to note that 38% of the young people killed had a fixed address and in many cases lived at home with their families. The propaganda

which stigmatizes as criminals the children of the poorer sectors of the population seems, therefore, at the very least ill-considered — particularly as a justification for the unofficial death sentence to which they are increasingly being subjected.

## Characteristics of the accused

On the whole, there is very little reference to those accused of carrying out the crimes. In many cases they are treated as 'unknown', once again indicating the lack of interest shown by the authorities (and society) in discovering the motives and identity of the killers. Only 74 of the 424 cases gave any information about the assassins and even that was fairly slight.

In trying to construct a basic profile of 100 of those accused, we discovered that there was little information available about their age profession, marital status or colour, which made it impossible to provide any detailed characterisation. From such relevant information as we were able to obtain, we discovered that 83 of the assailants were men, 16 were military policemen, and 13 were part of a gang.

In an attempt to gather additional information we used the descriptions from the other 350 cases which did not provide such detailed facts about those responsible. These fell into the following categories:

- unknown — 181 (52%)
- no information — 93 (27%)
- drug traffickers
- robbers/gangsters — 33 (9%)
- police/security guards 23 (7%)
- death squads/off-duty police - 12 (3%)
- others — 5 (1%)
- undefined — 3 (1%)

It is interesting to note that in 64% of the 181 cases where 'unknown' are cited as being responsible, the deaths are either executions or multiple killings.

Among those where there is no information about the assailant(s) the incidence of execution/multiple killings is 51%. These figures may lead one to assume that professional killers were involved.

Three predominant groups

were identified from the available newspapers information: drug-traffickers and organised crime; those whose job (official or otherwise) is to provide 'security'; and those who take the law into their own hands. The balance between the figures which cite criminals and those which cite the police or death squads as being responsible for these violent crimes gives the impression that many victims are caught in a sort of crossfire — just as likely to be the victims of those who support the law as of those who are outside it.

### Conclusion

The statistics revealed in this research are shocking. They show that the blame lies on all sides; on the State and on those institutions intended to protect the security of its citizens; on society itself which seems to have absorbed the phenomenon as something natural, no longer reacting against these offenses; and on the media who on the one hand reflect this acceptance, and on the other reinforce it by the way in which they cover the issue.

We feel that it is fundamental that the State and all sectors of society express the political will to resolve this problem, by developing strategies that guarantee society's control of public security policies and the activities of the police authorities.

The 1990 Statute for Children and Adolescents must be implemented and respected. It is also essential that urgent measures be taken to regulate the production and sale of firearms.

But the most important element in reversing the situation is to overcome the certainty of those responsible that they will remain unpunished for their crimes. Both the police and the judiciary have to be instilled with the seriousness and political will to investigate these offenses and to identify and prosecute the criminals involved.

Finally we wholeheartedly endorse the 12 point recommendations presented to the Collor Government by Amnesty International in 1990, which present proposals for the combat of violence in Brazil.

# Children's stories taken seriously

Children's stories are primarily a vehicle for communicating the values and beliefs of a particular society during a specific period. This aspect of children's literature formed the thrust of a paper (*Stories for children — the new South Africa's vehicle for its new system of values.*) read by Prof. C. B. Swanepoel (Language Department, Potchefstroom University) at an international conference on the use of stories and metaphors as tools in communication held in Budapest in July 1992.

He believes that for much of its history, South African children's literature has been written by whites for whites; it has paid no attention to the needs of the many black children of our country. Even today, he says, the literature for Afrikaans and English-speaking children is dominant and promotes an uncritical acceptance of a social, economic and political structure based on racial-segregation and discrimination. Literature for black children has always been, and still is, the underdog. However, he notes that overt racist portrayals of blacks in Afrikaans juvenile literature have decreased progressively over the last few years.

### Ignored

Although traditional beliefs and social structures of the black societies in South Africa reveal that children are an important part of the community, they are being ignored in the world of books. However, he says that the system is not entirely to blame — where were all the educated blacks and their leaders? One explanation he gives is that colonial rule and apartheid ideology focused attention on breaking loose

from oppression and nobody seemed to be aware that black children were no longer at ease with their own cultural identity because of the dominant influence of Western culture.

Swanepoel maintains that it is imperative for scholars to extend their view beyond the so-called artistic text into the realm of the readers and their society.

### Literature and society

He explains that literature does not originate in a vacuum, but that it is an expression of society. It has, among other things, a social function in the sense that it represents society as it is, and sometimes explicitly or implicitly adopts a critical role and urges change and development.

He argues that literature mirrors the values of society and unless it continuously aims to help to change and develop the thinking of the people who make up the society, faulty values and perceptions which have prevailed for generations will continue.

South African children will have to be educated to meet the challenge of a new, non-racial South Africa, in which interpersonal and inter-racial understanding will prevail. Literature has an important role to play in meeting the challenge of a non-racial South Africa, he says. Children are susceptible to influences during certain stages of their development. Swanepoel says that this has been especially true of ideological influences

which result in white children learning to behave as dominators and black children learn to internalize and adopt the role of the subservient. Children's literature, since its genesis in the 18th century, has been considered a tool of socialization. He maintains that deliberate actions were taken to use stories as instruments to educate children, to perpetuate the *status quo* and to inculcate in them the 'right' responses to the demands and expectations of the dominant culture. The norms and the attitudes of the dominant social group constitute the ideological basis of the stories which becomes the vehicle of its system of values.

### Communication system

Children's literature forms a complex communication system, but only recently came to be regarded as literature in the true sense of the word. Swanepoel stresses that literary study must take note of the fact that children's literature is part of a complex communication system which operates within a dynamically stratified polysystem of a given society.

It is necessary to see literature in South Africa not simply as a collection of authors and books from only one part of our society, but as a multi-factor determined process. He believes that children's literature must be accepted as a legitimate field of research and also as a genuine part of our literary system.

— CSD Bulletin



# NEWS

## Bayhead Place of Safety set for a major facelift

The once-notorious Bayhead Place of Safety in Durban is set for a major face-lift — this time with the help of its young residents! The NPA-administered complex which houses about 150 children, most of whom are street children or wards of the court came in for a lot of criticism two years ago for its "shocking conditions". Mrs Sonjia Hendry, assistant director of social welfare for the NPA's Durban and coastal region said they took over responsibility for Bayhead from their Pietermaritzburg office in January this year. Immediately afterwards they formed an advisory committee comprising a number of experts in the child care field such as Professor Walter Loening of the University of Natal, Lesley du Toit of the National Association of Child Care Workers, and the heads of both Durban and Pinetown Child Welfare. She said the whole aim of the project was to create a "more open system" at Bayhead where the children were involved in making decisions. Already Sunflower Project, a community development organisation had started literacy classes, the NACCW had started training staff and this

## Tenterden Place of Safety

Child care worker needed, female between 23 and 55 years, minimum of Std. 8 and with some experience of working with younger children.

**Telephone (021) 761-2554 for further information.**

## Situation wanted

Young woman seeks post in Residential Home. Completed BQCC and has two years experience in Child Care. Please phone Carol Williams (021) 696-4513.

month the NPA started pulling down the razor wire surrounding the buildings. [From Geraldine Malherbe, *Natal Mercury*.]

## Childrens' Home opened to all

Destitute children of all races can now live at the Marsh Memorial Homes in Cape Town after the Supreme Court ruled that the word "white" can be removed from the will of devout Wesleyan, Mr William Marsh.

Mr Justice H.L. Berman with Mr Acting Justice M. Seligson concurring, made the order after an application by Mr R.S. Tonkin, president of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa and trustee of the Marsh Memorial Homes. The Marsh Memorial Homes presently cares for 60 destitute white children. The court heard that in 1899 Mr Marsh made provision in his will for a trust to be found and maintain a home for "destitute white children" after his death. Mr Justice Berman

said: "As the number of white-skinned children eligible for entrance to the homes decreases as the years go by, there were, and are, any number of children of different pigmentation in destitute circumstances for whom the Marsh Memorial Homes would provide a sanctuary but for the provisions of Mr Marsh's will." It followed therefore that the court was empowered in terms of the Trust Property Control Act to delete the word "white" from Mr. Marsh's will, Mr Justice Berman said.

## TRAINING

### Transvaal BQCC under way

In the Transvaal Region we are nearing the end of the first Module of the new BQCC course. Sixty participants are currently enrolled on the course — two groups of thirty with two of the new trainers being responsible for each group. Because this new BQCC requires more involvement from trainees in that they participate in exercises and experiential situations, many started off feeling quite shy about expressing themselves in the large group, writes Jacqui Michael.



Jacqui Michael

Gradually, participants have relaxed more and more in the group and are really enjoying this type of learning experience. Many have felt that this way of learning has really challenged them to think carefully about many of their beliefs and values and about their child and youth care practice. We feel sure that most of the participants will

go on to do Module 2 next term.

We will be running both Modules 1 and 2 in the second term. The dates are as follows:

### Orientation Courses

18th August and 24th August from 09h00 to 12h30. Remember that attendance at the Orientation is a prerequisite for admission to the UNISA Certificate in Child and Youth Care.

### Basic Qualification In Child Care (BQCC)

Modules 1 and 2 will be offered on 1, 8, 15, 22 September and 13, 20 October. Module 2 will also have a session on 3rd November. All of the above sessions will take place from 09:00 to 12:00 at Strathyre Girl's Home, 11th Avenue, Kensington.

## Many involved in busy training schedule in Western Cape

A very large number of child care people are involved in training in this Region. Following on the Orientation Course in March, three BQCC Module 1 classes have begun with two more about to start — and yet another being requested by one of the Child Care Schools in Cape Town — bringing the total to six. In August a further Orientation Course will be offered, to be followed by BQCC Module 2.



Western Cape team: Training team leader Vivien Harber, Brian Gannon, Brenda Filmatter and Training Co-ordinator Mark Tomlinson

### PPA-kursus

Four teams from places of safety are finishing the PPA (Problem Profile Approach) course in the Western Cape. Ds. Richard Black, wie onlangs saam met 'n span by die Durbanville Kinderhuis die PPA-kursus voltooi het, tree op as dosent tesame met Vivien Harber vir dié kursus by Huis van Heerde in Moreesburg, Die Herberg in Robertson en weer 'n span by Durbanville Kinderhuis.

### Short courses

A group of 11 students is busy at present on the course on Consultative Supervision in Child and Youth Care Work, while a further course for the Certificate in the Training of Caregivers is scheduled for August. Michelle Theron, who has worked with Jacqui Michael in Johannesburg, is to offer in July the course for Voluntary Counsellors for child care workers and members of the public. Geoff Bestwick has also been approached to offer a further course on Conflict Resolution and Non Injurious Physical Restraint.

**Professor Wilma Hoffman, Deputy Head of the School of Social Work at the University of the Witwatersrand, speaking at the recent Graduation Ceremony in Johannesburg at which the Registration of Child and Youth Care Professionals was officially introduced**

## Some challenges facing the child and youth care professional

A graduation ceremony such as this one is a most appropriate occasion at which to celebrate achievements — milestones along the long, and at times exacting, journey of child and youth care towards becoming a profession.

I am privileged to have been asked to participate in this ceremony, and I take this opportunity to congratulate the NACCW on its consistent and persistent hard work over the past 18 years which now enables you as child and youth care workers to begin to be recognised as professionals, both by society at large and by those with whom you come into contact in the course of your work.

Other speakers today have described the development of the child and youth care movement and the growing number of knowledgeable and skilled persons who give service to children and their families — people who abide by a code which assures that their practice is of a high standard in accordance with the ethics of their profession.

Becoming a professional is not without sacrifice. All of you who have graduated from NACCW courses, as well as

each one of you graduating today, can confirm my statement. You have had to attend and study for the courses whilst working full-time — and not only this, but also doing work which can be very stressful — caring for troubled children. Yet you persevered in your studies, and today many are receiving the acknowledgement that your effort has paid off — you are joining the fold of professional child and youth care workers. My warmest congratulations.

It is a status gained but it is also a status which can be lost unless every one of you continues to maintain it — and not only to maintain it, but also to build it further.

### **The journey ahead**

So, your hard work has not ended today. Today is but a milestone in your professional life. Your journey as a professional still stretches ahead. The journey for each one of you will be different — depending on your degree of commitment to child and youth care, your working environment and your personal circumstances.

But irrespective of such differences, each one of you has certain challenges facing you as a professional child and youth care worker — challenges which can also be viewed as obligations on your part. I have selected a few of these to emphasise today.

### **Open to change**

Your first obligation is to be open to change. You can only continue to grow and develop as professionals if you are not frightened to change within yourselves, as you allow your new knowledge and skills to help you work more effectively with the children and their families. As a professional you also have an obligation to work towards social change — change in the wider circumstances which affect the lives of the children with whom you work, and their families.

### **Willing to grow**

Your second obligation is to continue to become more and more expert at your job. How do you do this? By continuing to seek more knowledge, by learning new skills and by continuing to polish the skills you

already have.

The cornerstone on which a profession rests is the unique and specialised body of theory and skills which makes it different from other occupations. Our knowledge also teaches us to think in new ways and to decide on specific courses of action.

Child care workers' special knowledge, skills and attitudes help them to add their professional opinions on the circumstances and treatment of a particular child and family to those of other professionals on the team. When you can share your opinions — opinions informed by theory and experience — colleagues will readily accept you as a valuable member of a treatment team.

### **Loyal to the profession**

Your third obligation is commitment to this profession which exists to meet the needs of children and their families. Being a child and youth care professional is more than just working in a paid job. It is often regarded as a vocation, a 'calling'. It is a privilege to be of such service to children. In your day-to-day work you will have a vision of better lives for children and their families, and for society as a whole.

It is also important to make some commitment to child care as your *career*, with long term responsibilities to your field of service, hopefully staying in your profession as a child and youth care worker, today launched in its new status.

It is also your obligation to entrench, safeguard and dignify the term by which your profession is known — child and youth care — and not to allow others to assign other names such as 'nanny' or 'house mother/father'.

Your service as a child care worker (mostly in children's homes and other institutions structured as bureaucracies) will at times be fraught with frustration and demoralisation. Being admitted to a profession implies that you *can* make independent judgements about services to children, but this will be tempered by the philosophy and milieu of the home in which you are working. Despite this, your obligation remains (quoting from



your own Declaration in your Code of Ethics) "to work towards the creation and maintenance of conditions within organisations which enable you and your child and youth care colleagues to maintain yourselves in keeping with the Code of Ethics".

There is much work to be done to further develop and consolidate child and youth care work as a profession. This now becomes your professional duty, because recognition of a profession is won only when its members assert their rightful place among other professionals, and when they can sustain that place. Being one of the oldest service occupations in the history of mankind does not make this easier, because entrenched stereotypes of what child care workers do and can do have to be broken down.

### **Models of care**

In conclusion I mention one further obligation you have as child and youth care workers in South Africa. You have the obligation to devise workable models of child and youth care for this country — models of care for children in difficulty whose own families are not able to care for them. Child care faces many challenges in the changing South Africa. I believe that you will meet these challenges — in the main because the courses you have studied have provided you with knowledge, have helped you to acquire and polish skills, and have tested your attitudes and thinking about child and youth care in general — and specifically in this country.

I remind you that the future of child and youth care is in your hands. Only the members of a profession are in a position to sustain and build that profession.